

Other factors such as burden of disease, magnitude of effect, current use, demand, equity and ease of integration must also be considered. Although less information was available about how to make explicit recommendations when there is insufficient evidence, the existing guidelines were adequate to develop a decision matrix for use in the IM setting.

**Conclusion:** The proposed IM decision matrix facilitates the direct comparison of otherwise diverse therapies, often using different research methods of variable quality to support their use. It offers pragmatic solutions for making specific recommendations about how best to integrate a T&CM intervention even when there is insufficient scientific evidence.

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.imr.2015.04.329>

OS09.03

### An integrative medicine approach to the treatment of osteoporosis



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**Purpose:** To examine the use of self-prescribed CAM, consultations with CAM practitioners, and consultation with conventional health care practitioner by a nationally-representative sample of Australian women who have been diagnosed with osteoporosis.

**Methods:** This research was conducted as part of the Australian Longitudinal Survey of Women's Health (ALSWH) which was designed to investigate multiple factors affecting the health and wellbeing of women over a 20-year period. Women were randomly selected from the national Medicare database. The baseline survey of 14099 women aged 45–50 years was conducted in 1996. Analyses for this research are restricted to the most recent survey, conducted in 2013, when the women were aged 62–67 years. The SF-36 quality of life instrument was used to measure physical and mental health.

**Results:** There were 841 (9.3%) women who had been diagnosed or treated for osteoporosis. Women with osteoporosis were more likely to consult with a general practitioner, specialist, physiotherapist, counsellor, and/or nurse. In addition, they were also more likely to consult with a naturopath and/or an osteopath, as well as regularly consume vitamins/minerals ( $p < 0.005$ ). However, there was no statistically significant association between having osteoporosis and consulting with a dietitian, massage therapist, chiropractor, and/or acupuncturist, or using yoga/meditation, herbal medicines, Chinese medicine, and/or aromatherapy oils. Women with osteoporosis who consulted with a conventional healthcare practitioner had significantly worse physical and mental health ( $p < 0.005$ ). Women with osteoporosis who used CAM showed no difference in physical and mental health to those who did not use CAM.

**Conclusion:** Women with osteoporosis utilise both conventional and CAM treatments, but appear to be discerning in their choice of modalities utilised. Further research is required to better understand the reasons why women with osteoporosis are consulting a range of conventional and CAM health care providers.

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.imr.2015.04.330>

OS09.04

### Challenges associated with developing research capacity amongst complementary medicine (CM) practitioners: a case study from a CM higher education ins



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**Purpose:** Background: Contemporary higher education institutions are required to show a commitment to scholarship and the advancement of new knowledge through research within their faculty. In fields where training has historically been underpinned by a focus on technical skills, such as complementary medicine, meeting these requirements requires developing research capacity within a faculty which is highly skilled as practitioners and educators but may have limited skills in research.

**Methods:** Methods: Secondary analysis of an internal organisational climate survey involving the faculty ( $n=389$ ) of a leading complementary medicine higher education provider in Australia which examined attitudes towards research and experience with a range of research activities.

**Results:** Results: The majority of participants ( $n=202$ , response rate 51.9%) identified research as being important to their profession (89.5%) and to their personal goals (86.0%), and that it was important to have clinically-trained researchers (83.1%). However, only 16.5% had published in a peer-reviewed journal despite 70% reporting having designed, conducted and completed some original research. Nearly 1 in 5 participants identified having no interest in undertaking a research higher degree. Participants were more likely to be interested in pursuing a higher degree by research if they had experience with journal publications or research projects.

**Conclusion:** Conclusion: The advancement of new knowledge and the sustainability of the professions of complementary medicine will rely on faculty in academic departments of higher education institutions to undertake meaningful and relevant research. For this to be achieved some challenges towards developing research capacity will need to be addressed. A number of solutions to overcome the difference between interest and capacity will be proposed.

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.imr.2015.04.331>